A Moon Landing? What Moon Landing?

By JOHN NOBLE WILFORD Special to The New York Times

KITTY HAWK, N. C., Dec. 17—Any event worth a line in the history books invites skepticism. The Flat Earth Society of London still has its doubts about Columbus. A few stool-warmers in Chicago bars are on record as suggesting that the Apollo 11 moon walk last July was actually staged by Hollywood on a Nevada desert.

So it was only natural that at its first meeting here since man's "alleged" moon landings, the Man Will Never Fly Memorial Society should cast a critical eye on the purported exploits of Apollo

astronauts.

From a high official of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration the society's members heard and saw "evidence" seemingly supporting their proposition that mankind's giant leap and Neil Armstrong's small step could have been a flight of fancy. The "evidence" was pictures of preflight training simulations on the ground that were almost indistinguishable from movies of the real thing.

An Irreverent Prelude

It was, of course, all an elaborate joke spun between drinks by some 200 of the society's members, who affirm that "birds fly-men drink" and gather once a year to prove the premise. Their 10th annual meeting last night was an irreverent, high - octane prelude to more solemn ceremonies today marking the 66th anniversary of the first airplane flight here by the Wright brothers.

The society's 600 dues-paying (\$1 for life members include aviation pioneers, military pilots, airline executives, newspapermen who cover aviation and space and even a man from Columbia, S.C., who has nothing to do with airplanes but comes every year wearing an "It'll Never Get Off the Ground" button.

According to Jack Aulis, a Raleigh newspaperman who is the president, the society's philosophical father is the editor in Dayton, Ohio, the Wright brothers' home town, who reportedly dismissed news of the first flight with words to this effect:

"Man will never fly, and if he does he won't come from -Dayton."

Case Against Apollo

The society's mock quarrel is more with aviation than with space flight. But Julian Scheer, NASA's assistant administrator for public affairs and a founding member of the society, showed the members how to make a case against the moon flights if they wanted to.

Mr. Scheer narrated films showing what appeared to be the moon's cratered crust outside a spacecraft window and astronauts walking on a bleak moonlike surface, loping about in one-sixth gravity and floating in raw space. Other pictures showed an array of scientific instruments among boulders and small craters.

of simulations at space agency training facilities. The scientific instruments were set up not on the Sea of Tranquillity but in a rock quarry in Michigan.

Actually, the movies were

"The purpose of the film," Mr. Scheer said, "is to indicate that you can really fake things on the ground—almost to the point of deception. You can come to your own decision about whether or not man actually did walk on the moon."

Annual Awards

While the members soared higher and higher from their paper cups filled with whisky, the society's annual awards, the National Anti-Aviation Citation Presentation, were announced.

The highest honor went to President Nixon-who could not attend—for his decision to spend \$1.3-billion on two prototype supersonic trans-

port (SST) planes. Noting that Mr. Nixon said that he approved the SST to enhance national prestige, the society declared:

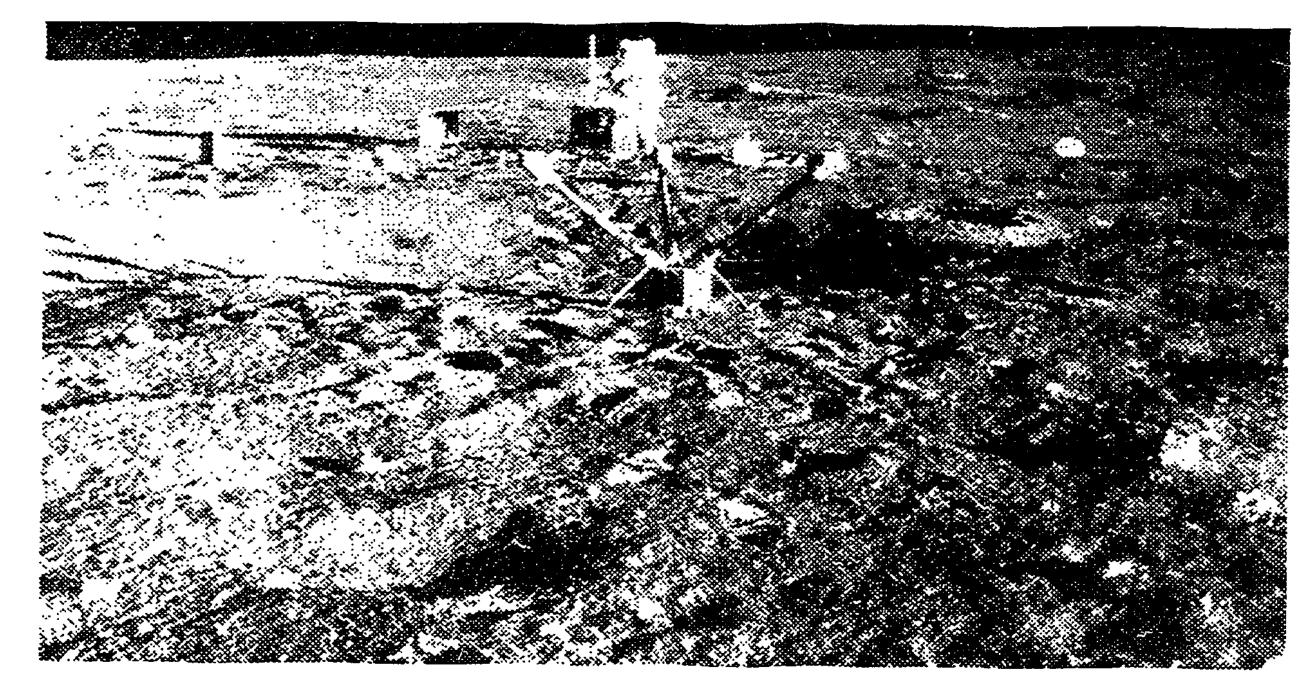
"Since Britain, France and Russia have already built SST prototypes, any all-American SST will, beyond any doubt, give the United States a. smashing aviation fourth."

On the morning after—at 10:30 A.M., the time Orville and Wilbur Wright cranked up for the first of four flights in 1903—three Air Force jets capable of flying faster than sound roared over the sand dunes where Orville Wright made man's first powered airplane flight. He flew 120 feet in 12 seconds at an air

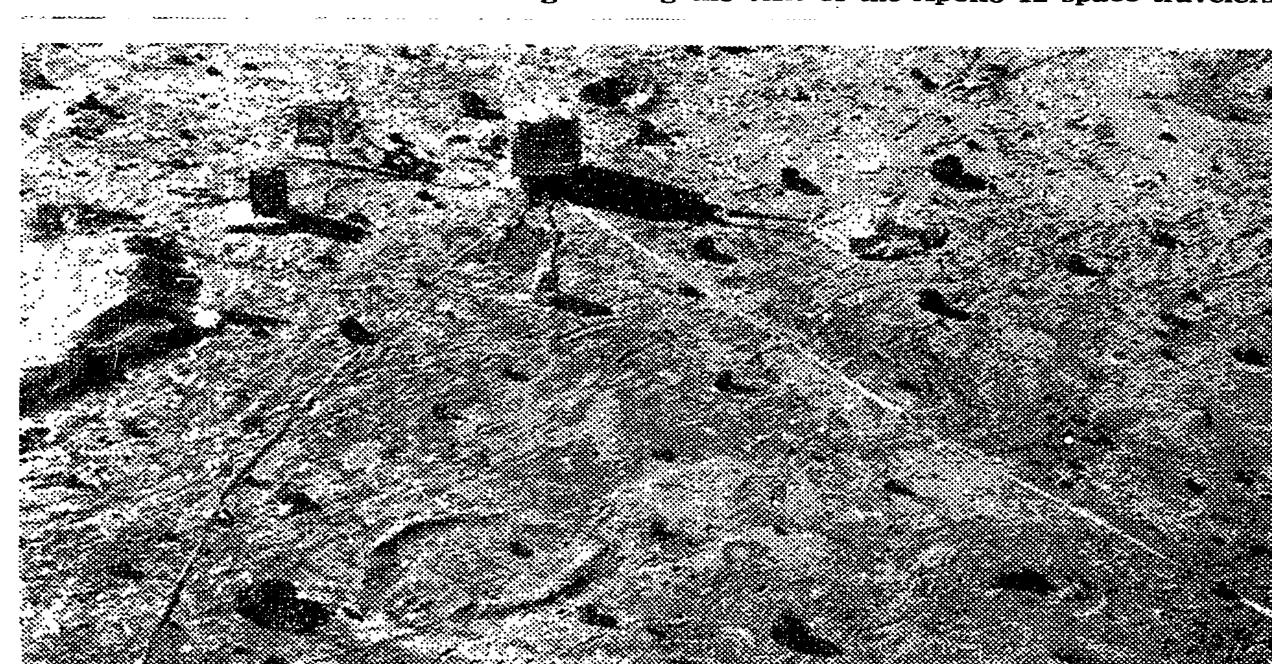
speed of 30 miles an hour. Still, the only credit that the Man Will Never Fly Society will give in its theme

song, is: Wilbur and Orville, those

men of renown, Who taught us to fly with out leaving the ground.



A scene on the moon—the real thing—during the visit of the Apollo 12 space travelers



A scene at a rock quarry at Ann Arbor, Mich., set by Bendix Corporation for training